

It is these folks and it is their families' sacrifice who brought us together. Once again, I believe that going forward, veterans just like these will continue to bring us together. It is my challenge to everybody in this body and all across the United States that we recognize our veterans' service and their families' sacrifices as we approach Veterans Day.

BUILD BACK BETTER AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, we stand on a precipice in which shortly we are about to deliver truly a once-in-a-generation piece of legislation; action that will lower the everyday costs that burden working families in my district in Pennsylvania and throughout the Nation—from healthcare to childcare and more—and fully paid for by making corporations and the richest 1/10 of 1 percent pay their fair share.

Here is what it does: First, lower healthcare costs: negotiating lower drug costs for seniors; halting Big Pharma's outrageous price hikes well above inflation; and expanding the Affordable Care Act to make coverage more affordable for those who buy their own insurance.

Second, lower childcare and family care costs: expanding the basic promise of free schooling in America for the first time in a century with universal preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds. This is so critical. In my State, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, only 16 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds have access to universal pre-K. It also will slash families' childcare costs; extend the landmark Biden Child Tax Credit, which has helped reduce child poverty in this country this year by 50 percent; and will expand access to affordable home care for older adults and those with disabilities.

Third, we are talking about the largest investment to combat the climate crisis in our Nation's history: cutting pollution; reducing energy costs; creating good-paying jobs with a transformational investment to ensure America leads the worldwide clean energy economy.

Why would we want China to take the lead on that? They are already investing a ton of money in clean energy. It is time for the United States to catch up and take the lead. We are the number one country, but in order to remain the number one country, we have to get with it when it comes to where the jobs will be in this century.

The Build Back Better Act lowers costs and fights inflation because—and I hope everyone hears this—it is fully 100 percent paid for. Not one person who makes under \$400,000 a year will pay one extra dime in taxes, not one. In fact, many, especially those families with children, will see their taxes go down.

Mr. Speaker, I want to paraphrase—and I hope I have the quote exactly right; I am going on memory. I remember when I was growing up in Pennsylvania some decades ago in the 1980s, our Governor was Bob Casey, Sr., a legendary figure in Pennsylvania politics.

He once said: What did you do when you had the power? That is a question that will be asked of all public servants. What did you do to help people when you had the power? That is what the Build Back Better Act is about, answering that question; delivering in all of these measures that I just cited.

Once this passes the House, passes the Senate, and is signed into law, it will truly be the most important domestic bill in my lifetime. It will help ordinary people, from the Second Congressional District of Pennsylvania, to all 435 congressional districts in this Nation. Working families deserve it.

Look at how hard it is today to achieve the American Dream. We know, based on statistics, that working families and middle class families are struggling out there. Yes, the unemployment rate is coming down. We are in such a better position right now than where we were a year ago. Every single statistic supports that. It is not enough. We need to build back and we need to build back better.

TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS REMAIN UNSPENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, right now, as our country continues to suffer from the negative effects of the Democrats' previous reckless spending spree, it is clear that we do not yet need another reckless spending bill that would further balloon our debt and raise all inflation without actually addressing the issues that we are currently facing.

Congress has already appropriated trillions of dollars that has not yet been spent. Again, trillions of dollars remain unspent. Instead of passing yet another trillion-dollar spending bill, of which only 10 percent would actually go to true infrastructure, we can repurpose those earlier funds to meet the needs of our communities.

I am proud to be joining my colleagues as a cosponsor of legislation that would use the money that Congress has already approved to truly help the communities that we serve; legislation that has already been passed by our colleagues in the Senate.

Now is not the time to waste money on taxpayer-funded kickbacks to green energy companies or spend \$50 million to monitor coastal erosion. We need to fund infrastructure improvements that our communities need. We need to do so without mortgaging our children's future.

We were elected to be responsible stewards of the taxpayers' dollars, and

passing the Green New Deal dressed up as infrastructure is not the way forward.

BUILD BACK BETTER AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ROSS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the urgent need to pass the Build Back Better agenda, a transformational package that will help individuals and working families across North Carolina.

This bold legislation will bring down the high costs that have held families back for decades by making childcare, home care, education, healthcare, and housing more affordable. This is a package for the people—all the people—and it spans generations, providing support to infants, students, working adults, and older Americans.

Right now, the average annual cost for a child in North Carolina to attend a childcare center is nearly \$9,000. The average North Carolina family with two young children spends more than 20 percent of their annual income on childcare. That is unacceptable. For kids to thrive and for parents to excel in the workplace, we need quality, affordable childcare.

I have a constituent from Cary, North Carolina, named Katy, she works at a nonprofit and has a 1-year-old child. She told me this:

Becoming a mom has opened my eyes to how broken our Nation's childcare system is.

We felt lucky to find a spot for my child at a high-quality childcare program, but the cost was shocking. We pay more than \$800 a month for my son's care.

At the same time, the director and teachers at my son's program likely don't make a living wage.

They're doing one of the most important jobs in the world, helping raise the next generation. Why aren't they compensated fairly?

Childcare providers shouldn't have to work second jobs on the weekends to feed their families, but many do.

At the same time, parents can't shoulder the burden.

In fact, the extremely high cost of childcare is a major factor for my family as we decide to have a second child.

Katy's story is so common. If we claim to value our children and our families, we need to stop turning a blind eye to the exploding costs of childcare. We can do better.

That is why the Build Back Better Act will provide universal pre-K for all 3- and 4-year-olds and limit childcare costs for working families to no more than 7 percent of their income.

Mr. Speaker, we also need to do more for our seniors and their loved ones. Every American should be able to look forward to a comfortable, secure retirement. Our seniors should not have to worry about financially burdening their children and their grandchildren.

In my family, my father-in-law wanted to stay in the home he loved, and he did until he was 98 years old. We found

it very difficult to find him home care. I continue to hear stories from seniors in my district who have had to give up their homes simply to stay in a nursing home.

Again, we can do better. That is why the Build Back Better Act will provide a historic investment in home care in order to help the more than 800,000 people on State Medicaid waiting lists.

Mr. Speaker, when we pass this bill, more of our people will stop struggling to make ends meet and start experiencing true financial security.

When we pass this bill, more of our children and our seniors will receive the care they deserve. And, most importantly, when we pass this bill we will be one giant step closer to an America where everyone has the chance to pursue the American Dream and the means to support their families.

OPTIONS OVER TERMINATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt about it, we are in a time of crisis largely fueled by the Democratic Party and President Biden's policies. Store shelves are increasingly empty, the cost of basic goods is soaring, supply chains are failing, ports are backlogged, and government restrictions on domestic energy have driven the price of gasoline to 7-year highs. Who is it that foots the bill for these progressive policies? I will tell you, it is hardworking American families.

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Rather than address the underlying causes of scarcity by bolstering American production and enhancing our Nation's energy independence, the Biden administration has worsened the situation with their dictatorial policies and mandates, most recently in the form of an executive order requiring all Federal employees and contractors be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by November 22 and December 8, respectively.

The alternative? Termination.

This mandate goes too far and has become a model for Democratic Governors across the country—including my own State of Washington's Governor Inslee—who are using it to justify their own drastic actions and impose similar State-level mandates.

Now, in addition to the hundreds of State emergency personnel who are already out of work, threatening the safety of our communities, central Washington also has hundreds of Federal workers and contractors who are facing termination.

American businesses have been struggling enough to find workers, fill production shifts, and deliver goods. President Biden's one-size-fits-all vaccine mandate will further hammer our small businesses, driving up prices,

slowing down deliveries, and exacerbating supply chain problems.

First responders and frontline healthcare workers are also being fired for not complying with COVID-19 vaccine mandates. In the State of Washington, we have seen hundreds of our brave law enforcement officers forced to choose between vaccination and doing their jobs. Leaving our communities, which are facing rising crime rates, unprotected is not going to increase anyone's safety.

Hospitals and health clinics are experiencing staffing shortages as well. The remaining employees are then overworked to compensate, leading to burnout and increased staff turnover. Leaving our hospitals understaffed is not going to help our communities overcome this public health crisis.

President Biden's deadline for the vaccine mandate brushes right up against the peak holiday season. Since cargo distribution companies are already battling unprecedented labor shortages, this mandate is likely to wreak havoc on the global supply chain when it is stressed the most, during the holidays. Leaving our tables empty and the space under our Christmas trees bare is not going to improve morale.

But why is President Biden perpetuating a permanent state of emergency? The only answer that comes to mind is that he is more concerned about expanding governmental control than the safety and stability of our workforce or the protection of our individual rights.

Not only does this mandate go against our inalienable rights protected in the Constitution, but it ignores the fact that natural immunity also provides protection against infection from the virus. In fact, other countries have adopted policies upholding this as a valid, science-based exemption from vaccine requirements. The mandate also doesn't allow workers to opt out through frequent COVID testing, as many private businesses have chosen to do.

Federal employees who have opted not to receive the vaccine because they have natural immunity developed after recovering from the virus do not deserve to be fired, especially when those same men and women have worked tirelessly to keep our communities safe and healthy before there was even a vaccine available. These men and women, who have been on the front lines since the beginning of the pandemic and risking their families' health and safety to ensure our Federal and State projects continued and that our communities remained protected, deserve our respect, not our condemnation.

But the President has doubled down on his policies, stating that he absolutely thinks police officers and emergency responders should be fired if they do not comply with this mandate.

That is why I introduced the Options Over Terminations Act. This legislation would provide an exemption to the

Federal COVID-19 mandate for any Federal employee or contractor who provides proof of COVID-19 antibodies.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support my legislation and provide our workers with a smart, science-based alternative to President Biden's vaccine mandate.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF DISASTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, over this past week, it has been heartening to see the climate pledges and vows coming out of Glasgow. Our success in Glasgow, however, will not come from voluntary pledges and vows. It must include specific, effective steps that can be put in place now to begin making a difference.

I have worked on the climate issue since 1991 when I was a member of the city council that enacted the Nation's first carbon commitments which we have met over those years. But the cascade of recent extraordinary weather events has made it clear—as if we needed further reminders—that we are entering a new era in terms of impact and public awareness of climate disasters.

The Oregon experience has been searing. We had the worst air quality in the world last year due to extreme forest fires. And in my district when we set an all-time heat record of 116 degrees this summer after setting two other previous all-time highs, we recorded temperatures of 180 degrees in the heart of my district. No wonder hundreds of people died.

Working on these issues for years, we have had some successes, but we can no longer afford to be nibbling around the edges. We need bold, transformative action to meet the scale of this problem. We must continue to fight to reduce emissions and improve our resilience by passing the Build Back Better Act and the bipartisan infrastructure bill together.

But as we undertake that enormous effort, we must also undertake the massive issues of community preparedness, resilience, and risk mitigation. We can start with some of the basics: stop allowing new development in risky places like the fire zone, the urban-rural interface, or areas with high flood risk. We must deal with repetitive flood loss in a more thoughtful way, including paying to remove properties and people to ensure that the vulnerable aren't stranded in high-risk areas.

We must enhance the protections of the Stafford Act and help FEMA address the challenges of today's climate. FEMA does not actually have a mandate to deal with the extreme heat like we had in Portland that was killing people. We must empower cities and States to be both proactive and realistic in their approaches to planning,